



California
Center for
School Climate



AUDIO GALLERY

Los Angeles Unified School District

LOS ANGELES, CA

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A DISTRICT BLUEPRINT FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS

Across the nation, schools and districts have shifted toward more comprehensive well-being approaches by implementing programs and policies that address all aspects of wellness for community members, including physical, emotional, social, and mental health. District- and school-based health and wellness programs are an essential strategy for educational equity, as research shows a clear link between health impacts and academic achievements and outcomes.¹

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's framework for addressing health in schools is the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child, or WSCC model. It brings together the common goals of public health and education to put children's needs at the center. The WSCC model also emphasizes the role of communities in supporting their local schools, the connections between health and academic achievement, and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices.²

District wellness policies are essential in shaping the health and wellness environments of educational institutions. Wellness policies that support collaboration, implementation, and evaluation lay the foundation for healthy school environments.³ Promoting healthy environments is especially important in urban school districts, where students are more likely to be exposed to safety and health risks, engage in risk-taking behaviors, and have barriers to accessing health care.⁴

A lot of people see school as hope, as a safety net.

SANDRA VACA-ROMAN

Healthy Start Program Coordinator

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Los Angeles Unified Invests in Student Health and Wellness

As the second largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is an example of a large urban school district that has purposefully invested in enhancing its infrastructure for student health and wellness initiatives.⁵

The LAUSD Board of Education adopted the Blueprint for Wellness Policy, which guides the district’s implementation of a comprehensive health and wellness plan for students, families, and staff.⁶ The Blueprint for Wellness Policy includes guidance for school sites and examples of bright spots across the district. The Blueprint includes eight areas that govern wellness, which align with the WSCC model:⁷

1. Nutrition services
2. Physical education
3. Health education
4. Health services
5. Positive attendance and building resiliency
6. Safe environment
7. Staff wellness
8. Parent and community involvement

The Wellness Programs Department at LAUSD oversees the implementation of the Blueprint and coordinates programs across departments with a focus on the eight areas that govern wellness. Staff in the Wellness Programs Department described several programs across these focus areas, two of which have been especially popular with caregivers:

- Healthy Habits for Families, an 8-week workshop series to support nutrition education
- Walk to Wellness, a physical education program

LAUSD’s family programming serves a dual purpose of fostering community between caregivers, while also keeping families engaged in their children’s education.

Our parents . . . are the first teachers for our students.

WILLIAM CELESTINE

Director of Wellness Programs

District Information	
Number of students	420,454
Geographic setting	Urban
Grades served	TK–12

Student Demographics	
Latinx	73.8%
White	9.6%
Black	7.1%
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6.5%
Multiracial	2.8%
Native American/Alaska Native	1.5%
Students with disabilities	14.6%
English language learners	22.6%
Socioeconomically disadvantaged	86.0%

Data sourced from the [California School Dashboard](#), [District performance overview—Los Angeles Unified School District](#), and [Fingertip facts](#).



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Consider while you listen . . .

- How does your school or district define and address health and wellness?
- How does your school or district address physical, mental, and social and emotional health?
- How does your school or district partner with community members and organizations to support health and wellness initiatives?

References

¹ Action for Healthy Kids. (2017). *Developing healthy, successful urban students through school district infrastructure*. https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Urban_Wellness_Coalition_Infrastructure_Impact_Paper_Oct2017.pdf

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, February 9). *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>

³ Alliance for a Healthier Generation. (2024). *Local school wellness policy*. <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/policy/local-school-wellness-policy>

⁴ Action for Healthy Kids, 2017.

⁵ Action for Healthy Kids, 2017.

⁶ Los Angeles Unified School District. (2017). *Blueprint for Wellness: Healthy choices for lifelong health: The LAUSD Health and Wellness Policy*. https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/453/files/Blueprint%20for%20Wellness_030218.pdf

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023.

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